

Grants will benefit coastal communities recovering from Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike
April 30, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., and U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03) today announced that the U.S. Department of Commerce will make three economic development investments in Louisiana. These funds will support programs focused on recovery through economic development in areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike. The grants will support Idea Village in New Orleans (\$800,000), the Greater New Orleans Development Foundation (\$750,000) and the Evangeline Economic and Planning District (\$150,000).

"This is an investment in South Louisiana's future," Sen. Landrieu said. **"These organizations are helping our communities rebuild through smart economic development and entrepreneurship programs."**

"Innovation and entrepreneurship are key to our recovery in south Louisiana," said Rep. Melancon.

"These grants will support economic development in communities across coastal Louisiana, growing our local businesses and helping them create new jobs for our workers."

The Greater New Orleans Regional Economic Alliance (GNO) will receive \$750,000 to implement a coordinated economic recovery strategy, seizing on the unique assets of the region. The GNO serves Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington parishes.

"This is a very exciting opportunity for GNO, Inc. and the region," said Michael Hecht, President and CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc.

This funding will create the capacity to accelerate our roadmap for new growth and investment in Greater New Orleans. Our efforts have focused largely on creating a re-energized regional collaborative that can capitalize on the full range of assets found in this 10-parish area. From our strategic location at the mouth of the Mississippi, to our developing industries in film and digital media, our region is in a unique position to continue adding jobs and new investment. GNO, Inc. thanks the EDA and our regional partners for this grant."

The Idea Village program in New Orleans will receive \$800,000. This program matches

visiting MBA students with local entrepreneurs and start-up companies to provide technical assistance and business investment assistance to ensure the success of emerging industries in the New Orleans region. This grant will support green technology, medical distribution and production, information technology, web development and digital media production.

"While Katrina may be New Orleans' greatest challenge, it could also be our resounding legacy," explains Tim Williamson, Co-Founder and CEO of The Idea Village. **"New Orleans has become a domestic laboratory of innovation and entrepreneurship. With support from the Economic Development Administration, The Idea Village is developing innovative programs that can be replicated nationwide to foster economic recovery and growth through entrepreneurship."**

An additional \$150,000 will be invested in to the Evangeline Economic and Planning District, which encompasses Acadian, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermillion parishes. These funds will provide additional personnel and resources to allow the Evangeline Economic and Planning District to assist in monitoring several Economic Development Administration disaster recovery projects in the region.

"These funds will enable Acadiana Regional Development District to provide staff members for individual counseling and information to residents, business recovery loans to small businesses, as well as, individual technical assistance to local municipalities, during a disaster recovery period," said Grayling Hadnott, Economic Development Planner for the Evangeline Economic and Planning District.

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